

Office of Congressman Charles W. Dent  
*Proudly Representing Pennsylvania's 15<sup>th</sup> District*



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## Congressman Dent introduces legislation to provide air support for border security

U.S. Rep. Charlie Dent (PA-15), a member of the House Committee on Homeland Security, today announced the introduction of his bill, the “Civil Air Patrol Homeland Security Support Act of 2007,” to bolster efforts at securing America’s borders. Congressman Dent made the announcement at Queen City Municipal Airport in Allentown, surrounded by volunteer pilots and cadets of the Civil Air Patrol.

“This bill will authorize the Department of Homeland Security to enlist Civil Air Patrol (CAP) assets to help in the fight to keep our borders secure,” Congressman Dent said. “This bill emerged in part from what I learned on a Congressional delegation trip to the U.S.-Mexico border at Laredo, Texas.”

Congressman Dent’s legislation authorizes the Secretary of Homeland Security to utilize CAP assets in two important kinds of homeland security missions. First, they can be deployed to protect against illegal entry, as well as against “trafficking in goods, currency, people, and other substances.” Second, they can also be utilized in response to an act of terrorism or natural disaster by assisting in damage assessment, search and rescue, evacuations, and the transportation of essential materials.

“While at Laredo I was disturbed and surprised to learn that the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) does not have access to enough

aviation assets to help them counter the influx of illegal aliens migrating across the Rio Grande,” Congressman Dent said. “This legislation would help CBP increase its aerial surveillance capabilities at the border by enlisting the aid of the Civil Air Patrol.

“Our local CAP officials have informed me that they are eager to participate in America’s homeland security mission. The cost of flying and maintaining CAP aircraft is relatively inexpensive, the pilots are experienced, and the need for their assistance is great.”

CAP is the official civilian auxiliary of the United States Air Force. Congressman Dent said CAP has authorized a “Concept of Operations,” which provides the mechanism for CAP assets to be used for missions not specifically directed by the Secretary of Defense. Congressman Dent’s bill would formalize that arrangement between the Air Force and the Department of Homeland Security.

“I believe that by bringing CAP into the homeland security equation, this legislation will help in our fight against illegal immigration and will become an integral part of our nation’s strategy to maintain border security.”

Congressman Dent, who serves as Ranking Member (minority chairman) of the Subcommittee on Emergency Communications, Preparedness and Response, intends to submit the legislation immediately upon Congress’ return to legislative business on 27 February.

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